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Washington, DC - Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) joined 23 other Members of Congress in support of legislation that would give subpoena power to the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling (H.R. 5481). The power to issue subpoenas would be part of the Commission's investigation. The ability to issue subpoenas will help the Commission get a full and accurate accounting of what caused the BP oil rig explosion and subsequent oil spill.

"The National Commission needs to hold BP and all responsible parties accountable," said Congresswoman McCollum. "Granting the Commission the power to subpoena will allow a more thorough and transparent investigation into this disaster."

The National Commission, which is chaired by former Senator Bob Graham (D-FL) and former EPA Administrator Bill Reilly (1989-1992), is expected to meet for the first time very soon to hold public hearings. It will also request information from government agencies, nonprofit organizations, experts in the oil and gas industries, and the companies in question - BP, Transocean, Halliburton, and others.

"Gulf Coast residents as well as the rest of the American people deserve answers as to why our shores and coastal wildlife are covered in oil," continued Congresswoman McCollum. "As the effects of the United States' worst environmental disaster ever become more and more complex, the government's response must be more aggressive."

Since the explosion on April 20, BP's offshore oil rig has leaked an estimated 100 million gallons of oil. The oil spill has already ravaged wetlands, killed wildlife, crippled the local fishing industry, and destroyed tourism in the Gulf of Mexico area. The long-term environmental impacts of this disaster are devastating.

H.R. 5481 was spearheaded by Congresswoman Lois Capps (CA-23) and Congressman Edward Markey (MA-07). It passed in the House of Representatives with an overwhelming majority.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum serves on the House Appropriations and Budget Committees.

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